



Afternoon Alert - Tuesday, December 13, 2016

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK gave top play to a report that the Wall Street Journal reported that Apple Inc. has held talks about investing in a \$100 billion fund being raised by Japanese internet and telecommunications giant SoftBank Group Corp. Most commercial networks led with reports that a 28-year-old man was arrested in Osaka on charges of attempted murder for pushing two women on a train platform in Osaka, causing one of them to fall onto the tracks.

SECURITY

Inada expresses resolve to begin operation of Japan-China communication mechanism

NHK reported this afternoon that Defense Minister Inada told reporters that efforts will be made to swiftly commence the operation of a communication mechanism between defense officials of Japan and China following an incident in which SDF planes scrambled after Chinese military planes passed between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako Island on Saturday. According to the network, the defense chief also said: "The SDF planes did not interfere with Chinese military planes or endanger their crews. We issued a protest by saying it is regrettable that China made a statement that is not true."

Trump comments on F-35

Asahi reported online on a tweet posted by President-elect Trump saying: "The F-35 program and cost is out of control. Billions of dollars can and will be saved on military (and other) purchases after January 20th." The daily said Japan's plan to procure a total of 42 state-of-art stealth fighters

beginning in 2018 may be affected if the incoming U.S. administration chooses to conduct a review of the F-35 development program.

Government spokesman voices regret at Onaga's plan to skip NTA ceremony

Asahi reported online on press remarks this morning by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, who commented on Okinawa Governor Onaga's decision not to take part in the Dec. 22 ceremony marking the return of the Northern Training Area by saying: "The return of some 4,000 hectares of the training field was included in the 1996 SACO final report....The return will help mitigate the security burden on Okinawa by reducing U.S. bases in Okinawa by 20% in acreage. The reversion will finally be realized 20 years after the SACO agreement. It is extremely regrettable that the Okinawa prefectural government, which is calling for reducing the base-hosting burden, does not welcome this."

Okinawa papers react strongly to planned Supreme Court verdict on landfill permit rescindment

Okinawa Times and Ryukyu Shimpo ran prominent front- and inside-page reports on the Supreme Court decision on Monday to issue a final verdict on Dec. 20 without hearing oral arguments regarding a lawsuit on Governor Onaga's cancellation of the landfill permit for the FRF construction at Henoko. The top court is expected to uphold the Fukuoka High Court's earlier ruling that supported the central government's argument that the governor's administrative decision was illegal. Okinawa Times wrote that it remains to be seen whether the GOJ will be able to move forward with the relocation work smoothly after the verdict because the governor plans to use his authority to cancel a permit for "destroying rock reefs" and also resort to other methods to block the present Futenma relocation plan. The paper insisted that the decision by the Supreme Court, which acknowledges the "geographical advantages of Okinawa," lacks scientific grounds and fails to take into consideration the opinions of the Okinawan people. Both papers ran editorials on the issue, with Okinawa Times saying that the decision by the Supreme Court is unacceptable because it deprived the governor of an opportunity to express his opinions. Ryukyu Shimpo argued that the Supreme Court decision violates democracy and local autonomy.

- [Okinawa seeks new avenues to block base move](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Okinawa to employ administrative procedures to obstruct Henoko relocation](#) (Yomiuri)
- [SDF troops use head camera for evidence recording in South Sudan](#) (Mainichi)
- [Letter sent to President Obama against NTA construction](#) (Okinawa Times)
- [Over 5,000 junior and senior high students take part in SDF introductory trials each year](#) (Akahata)

INTERNATIONAL

GOJ officially announces postponement of trilateral summit

TV Asahi reported that the GOJ officially announced today that it will postpone the planned trilateral summit between Japan, South Korea, and China until next spring or later. The network quoted FM Kishida as telling reporters this morning: "As the host nation, we have been making arrangements to hold the summit by the end of this year. However, for various reasons, we have decided to reschedule it for an appropriate time next year." NHK carried a similar story.

- [**Top nuclear envoys begin talks in Seoul to discuss N. Korea**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Former PM Mori on outlook of Abe-Putin summit**](#) (Asahi)
- [**METI minister refutes criticism of economic cooperation with Russia**](#) (Sankei)
- [**Japan, Russia deputy foreign ministers to meet in Tokyo to prepare for Abe-Putin summits**](#) (Yomiuri Evening edition)
- [**Major Japanese bank to sign cooperation agreement with No. 2 Russian bank**](#) (Yomiuri)
- [**Cartoon: Abe and Putin**](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [**China reminds Nanjing massacre cannot be denied at annual ceremony**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Commentary: Park's enemies seek to undo foreign policy legacy**](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [**Opinion: Concern about resurgence of "anti-Japan" sentiment in S. Korea and security issues**](#) (Yomiuri)
- [**Commentary: Why do U.S. media persist in biased reporting on Japan?**](#) (Sankei)
- [**Cartoon: Abe and Pearl Harbor**](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [**Abe determined to end isle dispute with Russia during his generation**](#) (Kyodo News)
- [**Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 11 and 12**](#) (Nikkei)

- [22% of DP Diet members approve of Abe's foreign policy, Yomiuri-Kyoto University poll](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Democratic Party's support rate remains dangerously low](#) (Nikkei)
- [DP chief tries to woo Tokyo governor into cooperating for Metropolitan Assembly election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Opposition party leaders to attend JCP convention for first time](#) (Asahi)
- [LDP Nikai dines with former PM Koizumi and son](#) (Nikkei)
- [LDP approves a bill on gender equality in politics](#) (Nikkei)

ECONOMY

[Cabinet minister holds meeting with envoys of TPP member states](#)

Nikkei reported online that Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Ishihara held a meeting with the ambassadors and other officials of nine of the eleven other TPP member nations at the Kantei this morning and called for their governments to make additional efforts to ratify the regional free trade accord quickly. The Japanese minister mentioned the recent Diet approval of the pact and said: "It represents Japan's determination to play a leading role in the formation of a free and fair trade zone." Deputy Chief of Mission Jason Hyland represented the U.S. on behalf of Ambassador Kennedy.

- [Only selected drugs receive annual revisions](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Drug prices to be evaluated annually to reflect market price, starting in 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [TPP-related bills likely to be shelved for the foreseeable future](#) (Yomiuri)
- [TPP budget amounting to 1.2 trillion yen draws criticism](#) (Asahi)
- [Editorial: Japan should use TPP ratification to speed up free trade talks](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Keidanren, EU business lobby group propose setting common rules for cars, medical devices](#) (Nikkei)
- [METI eyes 30 years for TEPCO to pay off the debt](#) (Asahi)
- [MOF arranging to earmark largest-ever amount for general spending in FY17 budget](#) (Nikkei)

- [MLIT sets up strategic headquarters to promote spread of autonomous driving](#) (Nikkei)

SCIENCE

- [Sea Shepherd leader denied entry at Kansai International Airport](#) (Sankei)

SOCIETY

- [Nationwide poll reveals LGBT individuals' call for education to eliminate discrimination](#) (Nikkei)
- [NPA to launch study on child selfie porn](#) (The Japan News)

TV PROGRAMS

Fate of Monju fast-breeder reactor

NHK's "Close-up Gendai Plus" on Monday reported that the GOJ is highly likely to decide on Dec. 20 to decommission the one-trillion-yen Monju prototype fast-breed reactor in Fukui Prefecture and launch a new project to build a demonstration fast-breeder reactor. The news sent shockwaves through the local community as it was not consulted in advance. The Monju reactor only operated for 250 days over the last 22 years due to various accidents and problems. The program examined the discussions between MEXT, which wanted to maintain Monju, and METI, which proposed starting a new project, adding that the GOJ is eager to develop fast-breeder reactors for commercial purposes as they are central to Japan's nuclear fuel cycle. The program also looked into a planned joint project between Japan and France to develop a new demonstration reactor.
